

Message Text

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73

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 /082 W

----- 092182

R 111630Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1980

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O.: 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, TS, LY

SUBJ: LIBYA EXPELS TUNISIAN WORKERS

REF : CAIRO 3104, TRIPOLI 322

1. TUNIS-AFRIQUE PRESSE (TAP) REPORTED MARCH 10 THAT LIBYA CONDUCTING "CAMPAIGN OF HOSTILITY" AGAINST TUNISIAN CITIZENS IN LIBYA AND THAT ABOUT 900 HAD BEEN EXPELLED IN PREVIOUS THREE DAYS. ACCORDING TO TAP, LIBYAN SECURITY FORCES HAVE HARASSED TUNISIANS WITHOUT REGARD TO THEIR LEGAL STATUS IN LIBYA, HAVE SUBJECTED THEM TO BRUTAL TREATMENT, AND HAVE SEIZED THEIR POSSESSIONS. TAP STRESSED THAT TUNISIANS ARE IN LIBYA AT LARG'S REQUEST AND UNDER GOVERNMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS. TAP DECLINED TO SPECULATE ON REASONS FOR CAMPAIGN AND CLOSED WITH "THE FUTURE WILL TELL IF OUR SPIRIT OF MODERATION WILL BE APPRECIATED FOR ITS JUST VALUE." PRESS ACCOUNTS OF EXPULSIONS ACCOMPANIED IN MARCH 11 PAPERS WITH PICTURES OF PEOPLE BEING ROUNDED UP AND MARCHED THROUGH CHECK POINTS UNDER GUARD.

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2. COMMENT: WHILE PRESS DEPICTED ANTI-TUNISIAN CAMPAIGN AS HAVING BECOME SERIOUS IN LAST FEW DAYS, MEDENINE GOVERNOR (IN REGION BORDERING ON LIBYA) TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER ON MARCH 4 THAT THERE HAD BEEN RECENT EXODUS OF TUNISIANS FROM LIBYA IN RANGE OF 300 DAILY, MOST OF WHOM HAD ENTERED LIBYA ILLEGALLY WITHOUT GOT PASSPORTS OR LIBYAN WORK PERMITS. HE SAW PROBLEM LARGELY IN TERMS OF DANGER THAT SUBVERSIVES BEING INFILTRATED AMONG RETURNEES. HARASSMENT OF TUNISIANS APPEARS TO BE PARALLED TO LIBYAN TREATMENT OF EGYPTIANS IN RESPONSE TO GOE DETENTION OF LIBYAN COMMANDOS. CONSIDERING QADHAFI'S BELLIGERENCY AND GOT'S DEFENSE JITTERS VIS-A-VIS ITS NEIGHBORS, A "SPIRIT OF MODERATION" APPEARS TO BE WISEST COURSE OF ACTION IN FACE LIBYAN CAMPAIGN.
SEELYE

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